

Natural Selections

Newsletter of the Penobscot Valley Chapter of Maine Audubon



April-June 2018

Year of the Bird

BY GORDON RUSSELL, PRESIDENT
PENOBSCOT VALLEY CHAPTER OF MAINE AUDUBON

Have you heard that 2018 has been designated the Year of the Bird? It's been 100 years since passage of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, enacted to protect and conserve birds around the world. The MBTA has boosted the well-being of bird populations, and helped prevent the extinction of egrets, herons, cranes and waterfowl. Yet many threats continue today, including oil and gas development, habitat loss, and climate change, to mention a few. In light of this milestone anniversary of the MBTA, and the continued need to protect birds, National Audubon Society, National Geographic, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and BirdLife International have joined with over 100 other organizations in a year-long campaign to raise public awareness of the importance of birds in our lives. This effort will be carried out through 12 months of storytelling, scientific research and conservation measures to examine how our activities are impacting birds around the world, and offer suggestions for improving their survival. Birds today face many challenges, requiring our continued involvement and support. To find out how you can help build a better world for birds, go to <https://www.birdyourworld.org>.

You can also celebrate our local birds by joining us for this year's Neighborhood Bird Walks in May. Penobscot Valley Chapter volunteers lead these walks from 7:00 to 8:30 a.m., which are free and open to all levels of birding experience. The bird walks are especially valuable to novice birders, who not only learn where to look for birds but also meet others who share similar interests in nature. This edition of Natural Selections contains the list of 12 Neighborhood Bird Walks in May. Please stick a copy on your refrigerator or bulletin board, so you can make plans to join us.

You might also consider going to one or more of the spring birding festivals in the area. The first of these is the Wings, Waves & Woods Birding Festival in the towns of Deer Isle and Stonington (<http://www.mainebirdingtrail.com/>

WingsWavesWoods) on May 18-20, followed by the Down East Spring Birding Festival (<https://www.thecccl.org/birdfestintro/>) on May 25-28, and the Acadia Birding Festival (<http://www.acadiabirdingfestival.com/>) May 31-June 3. All three festivals offer a variety of guided bird walks, boat trips, and talks to satisfy your spring birding needs.

So, we encourage you become more actively involved in your birding activities during this Year of the Bird. Sponsoring organizations mentioned above can provide ideas and motivation to act. Get out and enjoy the birds in your own neck of the woods, through our bird walks and other events. And by all means, share your ideas with us, so we can help spread the word.

BE A BIRDATHONER!

By Bob Duchesne

Each year, the Penobscot Valley Chapter conducts a birdathon in late May to raise money for the Fields Pond Audubon Center. Sponsors can pledge either a set amount, or an amount per bird species seen by participants during a 24-hour period. Several teams of expert birders will rise well before dawn to try and find over 100 species in a single day, in a friendly competition with other experts.

Unfortunately all that seems a little intimidating for most bird enthusiasts. Fortunately, there's a cure for that. Start small. Find some compatible friends or family, form a team of haphazard birders, and just give it a try. Limit it to what feels comfortable – your own yard or neighborhood, or maybe a particular park or uptacamp. In late May, all the birds are back and doing their darndest to tell you where they are.

Develop your own theme. Over the years, we've had teams bird by bicycle. We've had mini-thon and micro-thon teams, limited to half a day or less. We've had teams that bird with toddlers. We've had teams that sat in one place and let the birds come to them. There are really only two rules: raise a bit of donation support...and have fun. If it's not fun, stop doing it.

On the other extreme, you can go hog-wild. Take the Big Day challenge to find as many birds in one day as possible. Some chapter members have been doing this kind of birdathon for over 30 years. It's amazing how much you learn about finding and recognizing birds. The secret to a successful Big Day is to visit as many different habitats as possible—woods, fields, wetlands, ocean—within reasonable driving distance, and keep going for as long as you can. Most teams do not have the physical stamina to be able to bird for a full 24 straight hours—and that's OK! Not only is it fun to challenge yourself and test your skills, it is a joy to discover how your skills and awareness of habitats improve every time you do it.

There are lots of easy strategies to increase the fun. First, start with a good team name. Past teams have included the Raven Loonatics and Bleary-eyed Vireos. We can help. If you want to give it a try, contact Bob Duchesne at 827-3782 or duchesne@midmaine.com.

After your birding adventure, there is more fun to be had! The traditional post-birdathon pot-luck supper will be held this year on Friday, June 15. Sponsors and participants will join together to socialize and share birdathon stories, skits, and laughter. We encourage participants to make informal oral reports or perform short skits to share the highlights of their Big Day and receive special recognition for their efforts, although you also have the option to sit quietly and enjoy others' tales. This is our chance to acknowledge and thank the birdathon's many generous sponsors, since sponsoring a birder or team is an equally meaningful form of supporting FPAC. Please make this the year that you come out and join other involved PVC members for this fun yet critically important annual fundraiser, which provides additional resources for environmental education, programming, and outreach right here in eastern Maine.

MAINE AUDUBON

Penobscot Valley Chapter

Natural Selections

Natural Selections is published four times a year by the Penobscot Valley Chapter of Maine Audubon. Maine Audubon members living in the Penobscot Valley region automatically become chapter members and receive *Natural Selections* at no additional charge. Membership in Maine Audubon costs per year:

\$50 household; \$40 individual

\$30 senior/volunteer

Membership benefits include a discount on programs and purchases at all Maine Audubon stores as well as a subscription to the quarterly periodical *Habitat*.

The chapter offers a weekly email service to remind members about upcoming events in our region plus electronic delivery of this newsletter upon request. Please email Jim Zeman, kjzeman@hotmail.com to sign up for these services.

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Vice President.....Bob Duchesne
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Bruce Bowden, Timothy Conmee, Ellen Campbell, Katelin Craven, Gloria Vollmers, and ex-officio board member Eric Topper.

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Natural Selections

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www.maineaudubon.org/pvc

www.facebook.com/penobscotvalleyaudubon



FIELDS POND JOURNAL

BY STAFF

FIELDS POND AUDUBON CENTER

Farewell Cyndi Kuhn

Maine Audubon and the Penobscot Valley Chapter said goodbye to long-time staff member, Cyndi Kuhn, in March. After nearly ten years on the job, the final three of which were as the sole staffer at Fields Pond, Cyndi has gone on to pursue other opportunities. We will be welcoming new staff this spring and in the next newsletter.

Cyndi started work for Maine Audubon at Fields Pond in June, 2011. She started as the school programs and camp educator, working alongside FPAC's director Matt Dubel and the FPAC naturalist/communications coordinator Holly Twining. This group continued the storied tradition of diverse year-round programs and community partnerships which have attracted members and visitors since Fields Pond's founding. Cyndi picked up extra hours mowing and cleaning to help out with general upkeep during some very busy years.

As Maine Audubon worked through numerous transitions and struggled to fully recover from the 2007/2008 recession, Fields Pond Audubon Center also restructured and lost staff. Cyndi Kuhn stepped up to assume the leadership of Fields Pond and became the chief FPAC contact for colleagues and departments at Gilsland Farm. She dutifully fulfilled that enormous responsibility for the last four years, overseeing all of the local operations, programs, and sanctuary maintenance at Fields Pond.

Cyndi has been a committed employee, an inspired educator, a passionate naturalist, and a trusted friend for countless Maine Audubon staff, volunteers, and partners. She's directly



Cyndi

responsible for dozens of new programs, has overseen several important stewardship projects, created the Fields Pond internship program, and represented Maine Audubon regionally. Most impressively, Cyndi worked largely on her own to learn on the job and forge her own way.

Despite this impressive track record as the lead steward of Fields Pond Audubon Center, Cyndi will be best remembered and appreciated for her infectious spirit and exuberance, especially around Maine wildlife and habitat. We are all lucky that Cyndi's position at Fields Pond afforded her so many people to interact with and to affect. Many, many readers will smile warmly when remembering Cyndi's energy and passion.

Maine is often referred to as the world's largest small town, so we know we'll still see Cyndi around, as we have so many other great Maine Audubon alumni. Until then, please join us in a hearty thank you to Cyndi for everything she has done for all of us. Best of luck, Cyndi, Maine Audubon is forever grateful!

Penobscot Valley Chapter, Fields Pond Audubon Center

Neighborhood Bird Walks

May 2018

Unless otherwise indicated, all walks are from 7:00 – 8:30 AM. Rubber boots or waterproof shoes are recommended due to wet grass and occasional muddy conditions. In consideration of wildlife and fellow birders, no pets please on the bird walks.

Tuesday, May 8: **Indian Trail and Penobscot County Conservation Association**, Brewer

Leaders: Gordon Russell, Jane Rosinski

Meet at Penobscot County Conservation Association, North Main St.

Friday, May 11: **Bangor City Forest**, Bangor

Leaders: Paul Markson, Gloria Vollmers

Meet at parking lot in Bangor City Forest at end of Kittredge Rd.

Saturday, May 12: (Int'l Migratory Bird Day): **Fields Pond Audubon Center**, Holden

Leaders: Bruce Barker, Jerry Smith

Meet in Fields Pond Audubon Center parking lot.

Monday, May 14: **Kenduskeag Stream Trail**, Bangor

Leaders: Hope Brogunier, Gordon Russell, Jane Rosinski

Meet in the 2nd parking lot upstream of the intersection of Valley Ave. and Bruce Rd.

NEW THIS YEAR!

Tuesday, May 15: **Hart Farm, Copeland Hill**, Holden

Co-sponsored by Holden Land Trust

Leaders: Gordon Russell, Ellen Campbell

Meet at the old farm house, 430 Copeland Hill Rd.

Wednesday, May 16: **Mt. Hope Cemetery**, Bangor

Leaders: Jim and Kathy Zeman

Meet in the parking area inside the State St. entrance.

Friday, May 18: **Saxl Park**, Bangor

Leaders: Laura Levinson, Elizabeth Payne

Meet in Cascade Park parking lot, just off State St.

Monday, May 21: **Leonard's Mills, Bradley**

Leaders: Bob Duchesne

Meet at the junction of Government Rd and Rt. 178

Tuesday, May 22: **University of Maine**, Orono

Leader: Sandi Duchesne

Meet up near the Arboretum in the parking lot between the Emera Astronomy Center and the Jordan Observatory (driveway extends beyond the intersection of Rangeley Rd. and Long Rd).

Wednesday, May 23: **Essex Woods, Bangor**

Leaders: Robert Ostrowski, Steve Mierzykowski

Meet in the parking lot at the end of Watchmaker Rd.

Friday, May 25: **West Penjajawoc Preserve, Bangor**

Leaders: Elizabeth Payne, Lucy Quimby

Meet at the dead end of Fox Hollow Lane, off Essex St.

Saturday, May 26: **Technology Park**, Orono

Leaders: Jerry Longcore, Jim Bird

Take Godfrey Drive in Orono. Meet in the parking lot behind the building (formerly Nexx-Linx call center) across the road from Black Bear Inn

FIELDS POND CENTER PROGRAMS

Please refer to the Fields Pond Events page on the Maine Audubon website, <https://maineaudubon.coursetorm.com/category/fields-pond>, to sign up for these programs and view upcoming programs for all ages at Fields Pond Audubon Center. Due to staff transitions, detailed information on other programs was not available at press time.

Spring Family Fun at Fields Pond

Saturdays, March 24—April 21, 10-11 a.m.
\$60 member child/\$75 non-member child for entire 5-week series
Designed for children aged 2-5; siblings under age 2 free.

Young children and their grown-ups are invited to spend an hour exploring nature together through stories, songs, art, and play. Each week will include both indoor activities and outdoor adventures designed to foster a connection to nature, encourage stewardship, and provide an introduction to group learning settings. Themes include birds and nests, amphibians, wildflowers, animal babies, and more!

Advanced registration (via the website listed above) is strongly encouraged. Drop-ins are welcome if space is available.

FPAC SpringFest: Annual Celebration of International Migratory Bird Day

Saturday, May 12, 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.
FREE and open to the public; donations accepted

Activities include a morning bird walk and other birding-related activities to celebrate International Migratory Bird Day, a children's play area, self-guided trail exploration programs, and other activities still under development at press time. A detailed schedule of events will be posted to the website in April.



PENOBSCOT VALLEY CHAPTER FIELD TRIPS

Penobscot Valley Chapter field trips are fun ways to meet like-minded people, while enjoying the rich natural heritage of our region. Winter's over - it's time for you to come outside to play! (And learn!)

Saturday, April 7

EARLY SPRING WATERFOWL

(Rain Date: April 14)
Leader: Jerry Smith

Many ducks return to the area in spring plumage as soon as the ice goes out. The Orrington Marsh, Penobscot River, Fields Pond, and Brewer Lake are all good places to see both dabbling and diving ducks. Meet at Fields Pond Audubon Center at 7:00 a.m. The trip will end around noon. Please call 989-2591 to register.
Cost: Free; donations to benefit Fields Pond Audubon Center welcome.

ANNUAL FAVORITE

FREE MORNING BIRDWALKS THROUGHOUT MAY!

Please check out the complete list on the pull-out page in this newsletter. Penobscot Valley Chapter volunteers lead these walks to showcase the wonderful array of bird species and wildlife habitats in the greater Bangor area, and to introduce birders of all experience levels to potential future "birding buddies." Novice birders, new residents, and visitors in the Penobscot Valley region are always welcome—and if you enjoy these walks but have not yet joined Maine Audubon, we invite you to become a member of the Penobscot Valley Chapter this spring! There's an enrollment/renewal form in this newsletter, or you can sign up online at www.maineaudubon.org/support/membership/.

Saturday, June 16

KATAHDIN WOODS & WATERS NATIONAL MONUMENT

(Rain Date: June 17)

Leaders: Sandi and Bob Duchesne

We will travel together via 15-passenger van to explore the bird life and scenic vistas of Maine's new national monument, located east of Baxter State Park with spectacular views of Katahdin. We will make multiple stops and do some short, easy hiking (optional if you are mobility-impaired), but no long treks. Bring a brown-bag lunch and beverages for the day, or plan to buy them at a small convenience store on the way into and out of the monument. Definitely bring your binoculars and/or camera, because you will use them! Meet the van at Fields Pond Audubon Center at 6:00 a.m., or in the large parking lot behind Wendy's at University Plaza, Old Town (just off I-95, Exit 193) at 6:30 a.m. Return to Fields Pond by 5:00 p.m.
Cost: \$10 member/\$20 non-member, to benefit Fields Pond Audubon Center.

FIELDS POND BOOK GROUP

The Fields Pond Book Group meets monthly on Thursday nights at 6:30 p.m. at the Orono Public Library, facilitated by professional librarian Joyce Rumery. Here are the titles that the group will read and discuss in April, May, and June. The book group will then take the summer months off before reconvening in October 2018. Please visit www.maineaudubon.org or call FPAC at 989-2591 to read a short overview of each book.

April 12, 2018

Stolzenburg, William. **Rat Island: Predators in Paradise and the World's Greatest Wildlife Rescue.** 2011. 279pp.

May 10, 2018

Haskell, David George. **The Forest Unseen.** 2012. 268pp.

June 7, 2018

Wulf, Andra. **The Invention of Nature: Alexander Von Humboldt's New World.** 2015. 473pp.

PENOBSCOT VALLEY CHAPTER PROGRAMS

*The Penobscot Valley Chapter offers monthly programs on natural history and conservation-related topics that reflect the interests of our membership. We hope you will be able to join us each month for an evening of camaraderie, learning, and FUN with like-minded people. All programs are *FREE* and open to the general public, so feel free to bring a friend or an out-of-town guest!*

Friday, April 20, 7:00 p.m.

KATAHDIN WOODS & WATERS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Facilitator: Greg Westrich, lifelong nature-lover and published author

President Obama created the Katahdin Woods & Waters National Monument on August 24, 2016. But Mainers have been hiking, paddling, and skiing in this region for generations. When Glenburn resident Greg Westrich first climbed Deasey Mountain fifteen years ago, there was already a well-established trail up the mountain from the east. The Sebobeis and East Branch Rivers have been paddled for centuries by the Penobscots and other river drivers. Now these historic lands and waters have been preserved forever for Maine residents and visitors to enjoy, while providing important breeding and foraging habitat for native wildlife species. Greg will present an entertaining slideshow that covers hiking and paddling routes in and around KWW, good spots for a day trip with young children, where you could get lost for an entire week, where to find wildlife, where to see and photograph spectacular scenery, and where your own favorite spot in the park just might be. In other words, there will be something for everyone in this talk! Greg will also bring copies of his five published hiking guides for sale, and discuss his latest book projects.

Sunday, May 6, 12:00-3:00 p.m.

FIELD'S POND 20th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION: YOU'RE INVITED!

Come out to meet and chat with representatives from Maine Audubon and the Penobscot Valley Chapter, along with many of your fellow Maine Audubon members, as we joyfully celebrate the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Fields Pond Audubon Center in Holden and Orrington. Here's an approximate schedule for the day's events, all of which are FREE and open to the public:

12:00-1:00 p.m.

Picnic Lunch with short commemorative speeches by Maine Audubon's Executive Director Andy Beahm and Orono resident Jim Hinds, a former PVC board member who worked with others behind the scenes in the mid-1990s to help transform Fields Pond Audubon Center from a distant pipe dream into an on-the-ground reality.

1:00-2:00 p.m.

Fields Pond for Kids! Maine Audubon educators will lead age-appropriate activities for children, while parents attend the Annual Meeting and presentation. Please ensure that your children are dressed appropriately for outdoor play.

1:00-2:00 p.m.

Penobscot Valley Chapter Annual Meeting to elect new board members and officers, followed immediately by a natural history presentation; see a more detailed program description below.

2:00-3:00 p.m.

Ice Cream Social, Audubon-style! Van-choc-straw ice cream, fresh fruit, your choice of cone or dish, and a variety of toppings will be served. Enjoy a sweet treat as you meet and chat one-on-one or in small groups with Maine Audubon staff, Trustees, and Penobscot Valley Chapter board members. You can also meet the newly-hired Fields Pond Manager, who will help to build Maine Audubon's presence at Fields Pond as we continue to develop new programming and become more actively involved in the greater Bangor community. We'd also love to hear your ideas for new programs, field trips, and any state or local environmental issues that are top priorities for you.

Sunday, May 6, 1:15-2:30 p.m. (Time approximate – will start immediately after PVC Annual Meeting)

WINTER WANDERINGS OF THE ENDANGERED ATLANTIC STURGEON

Presenter: Catlin Ames, Ph.D. candidate, University of Maine

The Atlantic sturgeon has survived since prehistoric times, but it is now listed as an endangered species in the Gulf of Maine. Scientists at the University of Maine are trying to understand the sturgeon's seasonal migratory habits as it travels from its freshwater spawning habitat to the sea and back again each year, in order to develop better management plans to protect this species from further decline. Catlin Ames, the 2017 recipient of the Inez Boyd Environmental Research Award (IBERA), attached small transmitters to sturgeon caught in the Penobscot River. He then tracked the movements of 24 individual fish during their annual seaward migration with the help of underwater drone technology, and correlated their movements with a large number of environmental factors which the drone (known as a "glider") simultaneously recorded. In this talk, Catlin will present the results of his IBERA-sponsored research, which will inform his doctoral dissertation in Marine Biology and help to guide future management policies for this ancient and mysterious species.

Friday, June 15, 6:00 p.m.

POTLUCK SUPPER AND BIG-DAY BIRDATHON RECAP

Many members have told us how much they have missed the Birdathon Potluck Suppers that we used to hold every year. Maine Audubon recently hired a new manager for the Fields Pond Audubon Center, so we are thrilled to be able to revive this fun tradition! Birdathon teams will recount their Big Day adventures to sponsors and other attendees. Skits, songs, and other non-traditional reporting methods are welcomed, and the Clay Hardy Memorial Lane Duck Trophy will be awarded to the team that manages to list the most species in a single 24-hour period – but all teams will win a prize just for participating, in fun categories to be determined by the judges after hearing their Big Day reports! If you would like to form or join a Birdathon team yourself, or sponsor an existing team for a Big-Day Birdathon, please refer to the article on Page 1. All proceeds from the Birdathon benefit the Fields Pond Audubon Center, proudly celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2018!

MAINE AUDUBON

Penobscot Valley Chapter

c/o Fields Pond Audubon Center
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Holden, Maine 04429

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*Mission of the Penobscot Valley Chapter:
Conserving wildlife and wildlife habitat by
connecting people to our regional natural heritage,
through enjoyable and meaningful activities
that educate and promote greater environmental
awareness.*



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MAINE AUDUBON

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Penobscot Valley Chapter

YES! I want to protect and conserve wildlife and habitat in Maine as a **new** **renewing** member.

Annually \$30 Senior/Volunteer/Student | \$40 Individual | \$50 Household | \$100 | \$Other _____

Monthly Enroll me in the Frequent Flyer Program and charge my credit card each month:

___ \$5 ___ \$10 ___ \$15 ___ \$25 Other \$ _____

View all member benefits online by visiting maineaudubon.org/memberFAQ

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Check enclosed for \$ _____ Please charge \$ _____ to my credit card (below)

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Join or renew online:
maineaudubon.org/join

Our community of members is integral to our success on behalf of Maine's diverse wildlife and habitat. When you join or renew your Maine Audubon membership, you ensure that work can continue.

Thank you!